

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education; Education for Democracy

Vol. V. No. 4

NEW YORK, APRIL, 1916

50 CENTS A YEAR

APR 14 1916

U. S. BUREAU OF EDUCATION

The City

My Security lies in Honor and Justice,
Not in Dungeons or in Bludgeons;

My Wealth is in Men, Women and Children,
Not in Bonds or in Bank-Balances;

My Health is in the Joy and Good Cheer of
the People,
Not in Sullen Silence or Stupor;

My Prosperity rests upon Intelligence and Skill,
Not Upon Cunning and Exploitation;

My Progress comes from Life ever more
Abundant,
Not from War's Devastation or Death.

COLLEGE YOUTH AND OPPORTUNITY

SIDNEY E. MEZES

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TIMES OF RAPID and deep-going change are most congenial to youth, as they are least congenial to age. Most of the young are forward-looking, while most of those who have reached or passed middle age are backward-looking. The young have not yet settled themselves comfortably, or adjusted themselves, with more or less satisfaction, to things as they are, as those who have lived their way into life have done. It is therefore to the young that the oncoming days of readjustment will call.

There are many thoughts as to what will happen when the war is over; so many, that sober minded observers can have but little faith in detailed prophecies. But in face of the stupendous conflict across the Atlantic, the gigantic clash of rival interests and ideals, the unprecedented effort put forth, the appalling suffering and dislocation of life throughout the war-ridden nations, it is plain to see that men will begin to ask themselves for a revaluation of the ideals, the methods and the organizations that have brought about the terrible clash. The years that follow the war will witness a careful and thoroughgoing resurvey and reappraisal of our customary conduct, of the organizations of various kinds to which we have become habituated, and of the modes of thoughts and standards of value that have guided our lives. And, of course, this inevitably means many changes, at once rapid and even, in places, fundamental. And this appraising and planning will give opportunities for the youthful and forward-looking, greater and more responsible opportunities than any which have preceded them except, it may be, those that arose with the beginnings of Christianity and with the days of the Reformation.

To us in America, the dawn of a new era will have an added significance peculiarly its own. For whether we will it or not, our traditional policy of isola-

tion will, perforce, be abandoned. Our country will take its place as an active member, probably a leading member, of the family of nations, that will be forced, apparently, to achieve, somehow, a unity and harmony that has not, so far, characterized the intercourse of its members. It is not easy to exaggerate the changes that our full participation in world affairs will bring to us. The situation may become clearer, in general, if we picture in our imaginations the early years of the country boy come to town. For in our national isolation and lack of intercourse, or very incidental intercourse with other countries, our national life has been similar to the life of the country boy on the farm. And it may also be suggested, in the spirit of sympathetic interpretation, that our dealings with other nations, both our official and our unofficial dealings, have a likeness, by no means strained, to the dealings of countrymen with the dwellers in cities, who at times and for brief periods visit them. But what I especially wish to call to attention, by this simple figure, is the active brain, the changing habits, the heightened speed, and the difficult character adjustments of the country boy come to town. Similar changes will inevitably come to an isolated and provincial nation that comes to take its full part in the affairs of the greater world. Nor need we deny ourselves a satisfying faith in the sturdy and wholesome contributions that our country will bring to others, more sophisticated it may be, but probably, for that very reason, forgetful of many of the simpler and more wholesome habits and faiths.

Let us review some of the larger fields in which reorganization and change will come, and in deciding what fields these will be, let us remember that the new era will begin with a reappraisal of social values; that it will be chiefly concerned with raising the great question,

How well and how far do these and those great human institutions, as modified by the wonderful nineteenth century, contribute to the deeper welfare of men and women? For surely, institutions are made for men, not men for the greater glory or perfection of institutions.

Every newspaper reader knows that we are quickly changing from a debtor to a creditor nation, and every informed business man knows that credit is the precursor of trade. Let us also remember that ordinary business thruout Europe is disorganized, warped from its peaceful aims and configuration, adjusted to the stern needs of war. Our businesses, whether we will it and whether they will it or not, must do much in the future to supply the needs of Europe, and to feed the markets Europe fed before the war. And from this coming into contact of our business men from highest to lowest with the business men of other nations, we shall, of necessity, learn many things and unlearn many others.

Among the causes of the war and of the spirit and methods in accordance with which it has been conducted, prominent mention is made of education. And it is undoubtedly true that, in these days of all but universal education, the type of training given in the schools, from the kindergarten thru the university, has more to do than any other factor, save only racial bent, in moulding the methods and ideals of peoples. This great fact is sure to be increasingly appreciated during the period of revaluation to which I have referred. And as we come into more intimate intercourse with the other nations of the world, we shall learn, far better than we now know, that their educational systems are in many instances and respects different from ours. And learning this, we, being an alert-minded and practical people, shall take from them of their best, as our judgment assesses it, and work that best into our own educational scheme. The young men and women of to-morrow, those in school to-day, who will have an

opportunity to take part in improving our educational system, may well even now thrill with anticipation, and grow proud with the hope that they may render some really valuable services in this most significant cause.

Governmental systems differ in structure and in spirit among the nations. With more intimate intercourse we shall come to note this, not vaguely and in general, but with definite particularity. And we shall know better the peculiarities of our own governmental system, for instance, that we rely on checks and balances and on the complication of official machinery, far beyond the thoughts or practices of any other civilized people, and shall begin in a more open-minded way than we have in the past, to ask ourselves whether we cannot learn something from the experience of others, difficult as it is for man or nation to do this. And it may even be that some rudiments of international government will come into being, as one of the good fruits, one of the great profits, to balance against the unsurpassed disaster of body and of spirit that the war has brought. We cannot but think that our country will play a great role in any international governmental arrangement that may be set up, for our people is a powerful people, in numbers, in territory and in brains. Our country is the greatest nation that remains neutral, thanks to the wisdom, the vision and the firmness of our President. And if any nation is to play, in some measure, the role of umpire among those whose views have, perforce, grown increasingly one-sided during the conflict, it would seem that this role must fall to the United States.

Nor can we forget the heroic and helpful part that women have played during the days of distress in Europe, showing themselves capable as neither they nor their brothers had ever thought them to be, in work of many kinds, and measuring up in sacrifice to the best traditions of their mothers. Remembering these facts and all that they import, we cannot doubt that the confused and at times

unreasonable, but very real demand on the part of women that they should have a more significant part in the affairs of the world, will come up for the most serious consideration, and that the answer found will bring about changes in the status of women and of the family, and therefore changes in the social structure of the race, of the deepest meaning and, we must hope, of the highest augury.

Finally, for these thoughts must be brought to a close, the great body of religious minded people are sure to inquire into the role the church has played in the preparations for and the conduct of the war. Have the churches done all that they could? Could they, with more earnestness, intelligence and consecration, have prevented the war? Or, in default of that, could they have instilled principles which would have made its conduct more creditable to men guided by a spark of the divine? Should not the church of the future be a stronger, a more unified, a more intelligent and a more unselfish factor in the affairs of men? If the religious leaders of to-morrow help in solving these problems, if they solve them wisely, they will serve their fellows greatly.

And so, in all the larger fields of human interest, we see that a period of opportunity is about dawning; of opportunity so vast and so humanly appealing, that it may well stir the hearts, the minds and the imaginations of the young. For it addresses itself to them rather than to those who, before many years, will pass

from the scene. And the opportunities that offer themselves so richly to the young, offer themselves with especial pertinence to the youth who will have the great advantage of a complete education, insofar as the schools can give education. They will offer themselves especially to college youth. For to say that there are opportunities is to say that there are problems to be solved; and to say that these problems are unprecedented in magnitude and in human significance, is to say that they specially challenge those who have been taught to see the world broadly, deeply and in its complications, have learned to preserve their intellectual poise in the face of such complexities, have been taught to discriminate between the essential and the unessential, to make evaluations on a large scale, and to construct sane and thoroughgoing plans for dealing wisely with affairs of size and moment. In short, whatever else a college sets out to do, its central duty is to train problem-solvers on a large scale. And while it fails in this more often than we like to admit, it is yet true that it fails in fewer instances and in smaller measure than any other human agency that has so far been devised to supply this great human need. And so I should say, in conclusion, to able, energetic and ambitious youth, who would serve their day and time and help their fellows generously and well, Your best chance of fulfilling your ambition will be found if you take a college course, and bring to its work and its life the best that is in you.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE PLAY-A-DAY WORLD

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THE EDITOR asks me to write about philosophy and the work-a-day world. I have just been to see one of Broadway's "triangular" plays; and I confess I would much rather write about philosophy and the play-a-day world. For if ever a man

needed philosophy to sustain him in dark moments, it was while I sat thru the two hours and a half of maudlin pathos that has the impertinence to call itself a drama of American life. Ah, but I forget: the audience, between intervals of

rapt attention, clapped enthusiastically; and at the end (when the perfect noodle-head of a hero and the equally silly heroine worked themselves up to the saccharine embrace that must properly close every "satisfactory" play), gulping down happy tears, the audience almost cheered.

What is it, I ask myself. As cheap a performance as ever an honest soul could wish to avoid, and yet drawing crowded houses week after week! When I saw "The Weavers," the house was half empty!

I am coming to believe that we teach too little the philosophy of the play-a-day world. Or is there a philosophy of the play-a-day world? Or, better, what is philosophy anyhow that it can concern itself either with the work-a-day or the play-a-day world?

What distresses me is the absence of fundamental discernment in such an audience as sat at this play; the absence, apparently, of any sense of true and essential values. I am not an intellectual snob, I hope. Yet when I see people laughing at things that to me are simply gross and unmannerly; when I see them gulping sentimental tears at situations that are artificial and cheap, I wonder at the difference between us. Is the difference, I ask myself, simply one of taste? Some people love plush sofas with sunflower patterns. I detest them. Is it not the same perhaps with plays? If the difference is, in fact, simply one of taste, then *de gustibus non disputandum*. I throw up my hands and say nothing. But if it is more; if there are really standards, authentic values, truths of situation and action; if there is such a thing as *genuine* emotion and *genuine* human relationship, then as a philosopher I ask myself how these true standards, this essential genuineness are to be found. Has philosophy anything to do with putting people in the way of getting true standards in their play-a-day world?

I shall answer my question summarily. The trouble with that audience, I believe, was that they had no decent philosophy of life. They were an audience with simply a hodge-podge of experience and

emotion. They were not thinking, not judging, not valuing. They were simply allowing themselves to be slathered with conventional witticisms and brainless naughtinesses.

To have a philosophy is to have a point of view that goes to the bottom of things, that questions, evaluates, that refuses to be put off with mere sound and fury. I have sometimes wondered what all the teaching of philosophy is for anyhow. I have come pretty much to the conclusion that it is just for that—to make people rebels; to make them refuse to accept without question what is handed out to them; to make them hold the pistol of inquiry at everything that comes along and cry, "Hands up!"

The pity of American life is that so few of us are willing to cast our lot for the high adventure of criticism. We plod along quietly and comfortably, growing fat as we put on years, and, at intervals, shaking our sides with grateful cachinnation at the inane foolery that is doled out to us. We have no zest for ideas; no grip on big truths; we are too lazy or too tired to dig into the authentic underground of life.

Philosophy—why philosophy is for the adventurer, for the soul unafraid; for the spirit ever on the search for the bigger and yet bigger truth. I wonder how many in that audience had ever had even the first thrill of that great adventuring.

I write with some warmth of feeling, because I believe most fervently that the reason why our American life is dull and undramatic and all too utterly drab is that there is little in it of the spirit of philosophy, little of the spirit of venture—some search, little of the willingness to go forth and find the greater and the more commanding truths.

To see an ordinary New York audience should be an inspiration to a teacher. It should fill him with a sense of what life ought not to be. It should give him new stimulus to get into the play-a-day and the work-a-day lives of his students something of the more genuine, the more truly human. I am not one who believes that all philosophy emanates from the

professor's chair. Very often the title of the chair he occupies is about all the philosophy there is in him. Philosophy is simply a grip on life-values; and it exists wherever there are minds a bit more serious, a bit more courageous, a

bit more dead honest with themselves and the world than is true of the ordinary run of minds. Were there more of that type of mind in our schools and in our homes there would be smaller audiences at many a "Broadway success."

SOCIOLOGY AND THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

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EVER SINCE the European War began we have heard much of "culture." The term apparently signifies the achievement of a nation as reflected in the thought of its people. Borrowed elements may be included, but a distinctive tone is given by the social institutions that mould national life, just as the expression of thought is refracted by the forms of language. At least the Germans oppose the "Slavic peril" and attack "English commercialism" as vigorously as the Allies protest against "Teuton aggressiveness" and assail "Prussian autocracy."

The old idea of a cultivated man as one who memorizes classic poetry and appreciates ancient sculpture, seems to have given place to that of the useful citizen who is in touch with the vital movements of his day. Culture means broad enlightenment rather than polite learning; human sympathy rather than fastidiousness; coöperation rather than exclusiveness. Our notion of the scholar and gentleman is realized by one who understands the life about him and who plays his part in its upbuilding.

But how shall an individual or a people come to this understanding of life's privileges and responsibilities? Surely not by pure speculation, nor even by reading biography and history! The only way to understand a situation is to study the conditions that exist therein. The only method of finding what is to be done is to analyze the forces at play.

Now the study of social conditions and the analysis of social forces is commonly called sociology. Other social sciences

consider certain interests and limit their observations to one kind of institution, as, economics specializes in the field of business enterprise or as politics focuses its attention upon the state and its government. But men are creatures affected by other than economic motives or political ambitions. They are also members of families, clubs, schools, churches and a host of other organizations. It is the function of sociology to show how all these associations interplay and what is their normal relation. Only by considering his function in all of these does an individual arrive at an intelligent notion of the part he has to play in his community.

So in the case of nations, their place in history is to be determined not by any limited or insular conception of prowess, wealth or learning; but by the scale upon which all these elements are fostered by its institutions and combined in the lives of its people. Is it to be assumed, then, that a whole people can gain a clear conception of collective destiny unless the social conscience is enlightened by some worthy ideal held up for successive generations to strive toward and complete? Only by teaching the people in school and out the essential elements of sound social economy will their collective efforts be directed toward attaining in home and shop and commonwealth a just and equitable government. Then we may hope to see attained the realization of a true democracy, enlightened, united, aspiring. Such evidently was the thought of Confucius

in the following passage:

"The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue thruout the empire, first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their own states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such exten-

sion of knowledge lay in the investigation of things."—*The Great Learning*, V. 4.

This quotation under its strange oriental guise contains one of the most succinct statements of a program of social education known to the writer. Its message is peculiarly significant for America at this time of reckoning our course. If we as a people are to direct intelligently our collective actions, then it behooves us, in the words of the wise old statesman of China, to investigate the things that pertain to the life and welfare of the nation.

THE CRISIS

THE FORCES of control in the City of New York in affairs educational have reached what for them is a critical stage in the development of their long existing era of domination. Whether the control has been exerted by the Board of Estimate, the Board of Education, the superintendents, the principals, or even by the managers of the teachers' organizations themselves, the crisis in their supremacy is at hand.

The union meeting held by the Teachers' League of New York City at the Washington Irving High School on Friday evening, March 10, was attended by over one thousand teachers. Never before have so many teachers been brought together in a radical educational movement in New York. For weeks before the meeting the public expressed its curiosity as to the causes of the proposal to form a teachers' union, and the newspapers were very active in seeking interviews with officers of the Teachers' League, and almost as active in interviewing those among the teachers who happened to be opposed to the movement.

Altho it is true that the fashion of unions formed by teachers in other cities had something to do with the sentiment in favor of a union in New York, still there have developed conditions in New

York which afforded the stimulus for bringing to the union sentiment that vitality and "punch" which fashion could never give. Chief among these conditions is the attitude of the Board of Estimate of the City in the matter of its attempt to gain control of the Department of Education, and thereby to determine the salary schedule of the teachers and incidentally the tenure of office. This attempt has been so definite and specific that the Controller stated in a Legislative hearing that he intended to reduce the salaries of the teachers if certain "home rule" bills passed. The bills did not pass, owing to a superhuman effort of the teachers aided by friendly members of the Legislature. But the Board of Estimate has discovered an equally effective way of managing the Department of Education by hindering the operation of its functions. This of course is not a socially enlightened way of controlling, but it produces results. And the results have been to hold up the construction and the repair of buildings, and the appointment and the promotion of teachers, until general dissatisfaction is prevalent thruout the educational system.

Long before the Board of Estimate began its non-social campaign of harassing without helping the Department of Edu-

cation the system had had its multitudinous troubles with its supervising staff. This staff, conceived and organized upon military lines, lives up to military ideals of obedience and subordination. Quite naturally, those in command found subordinates who fitted into the existing ideals well enough to make them effective agents of autocracy, no less tyrannical than their own superiors. And also quite naturally the superiors, new and old, tried out their cat o' nine tails, their wheels, and their racks and screws upon the "paid subordinates" beneath them. Most of the paid subordinates yielded softly and submissively to the punishment whether it was merited or not, or whether there was any question of merit at all or not, and those who did not yield were given a form of ceaseless punishment by being placed upon an intangible black list.

In time there developed out of this inquisition a considerable body of "malcontents," "soreheads," etc., called so by the bosses and their hangers-on who wished to punish still further those who would not or could not conform to a system which they believed to be ineffective or even dishonest. Evidently there were many of these malcontents present at the union meeting, for an influential member of the Board of Education who was present himself remarked that he saw everywhere thru the audience teachers who he knew had grievances. He appeared to be impressed unfavorably with the great number of them. It was indeed an impressive fact, but the significance of it was not revealed to the Board member.

If the member could have sensed the importance of the fact that many malcontents receive thru their individual grievances the effective stimulus to real thinking, he might have understood that to them the union meant a means of overturning an unjust and non-social system of education. He might have understood that the natural support for a revolution in education would come from the working class, which has always de-

manded better schooling for children and better working conditions for adults. He would have understood that the only basis upon which a body of workers can ever develop self-respect among its members, and ideals and standards of work and professionalism, is the basis of opportunity to develop the ideals for itself. He couldn't understand it all, because he is part of a system which hands down ready-made ideals to its subordinates.

Fighting to the last, realizing that the crisis has arrived, the minions of the autocratic system have stooped to the childish expedient of interfering with the mail of teachers who have been receiving union circulars. Also they (the principal-minions) have refused to teachers the privilege of distributing union circulars upon the ground that they do not approve of unions. The privileges of having meetings to discuss unionism and of circulating petitions are refused. Scores of incidents of this kind have come to the knowledge of the officers of the union. Thus, the fuel out of which conflagrations are made is being unwittingly fetched by those who would burn themselves at the stake.

RECOGNITION OF THE UNION!

IN THE BILL for a new pension system for the teachers of New York City, prepared in coöperation with city officials, there is a provision for an actuary on the pension board. The actuary is to be "approved by, or be a member of, the Actuarial Society of America." Three cheers for the officials who are intelligent enough to recognize the place of a professional or trade gild in modern society!

Our poet seems to think that our principals and superintendents do not inspire us sufficiently. If he is right, where shall we seek inspiration?

The American Teacher

Democracy in Education: Education for Democracy

Published monthly, except July and August, by
THE AMERICAN TEACHER COMPANY, INC.,
129 Lafayette Street, New York.

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CHARLOTTE E. LEE.....Vice-President
JAY D. LESTER.....Treasurer

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At the time of expiration, a bill will be found
in the copy. Subscribers are requested to give
prompt notice of changes in address.

Remittances should be made in postal money-
order, express order, draft, stamps or check
(New York exchange).

**SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, 50 CENTS FOR THE
YEAR—FOREIGN, 60 CENTS.**

Entered as second-class matter, February 21,
1912, at the Post Office, at New York, N. Y.,
under the Act of March 3, 1879.

VOL. V.

APRIL, 1916

No. 4

This paper is striving to do its part
in the creation of a real profession of
teaching, the members of which shall
be self-respecting and respected, thru
stimulating clear thinking on the work
and the social position of teachers, and
thru intelligent criticism of systems of
educational administration. No greater
service than this could be rendered to
the children of the state.

THE CITY AND THE COLLEGE

THE DEVELOPMENT of municipal col-
leges and universities in recent years is
but an extension of the principles of the
land-grant colleges of two generations
ago. The establishment of these schools
marks stages in democracy's develop-
ment of a social consciousness. From a
vague feeling that education is somehow

necessary for the culture and dignity of
the superior classes, we are moving
toward the definite conviction that edu-
cation is necessary for increasing the ef-
fectiveness of all those kinds of work in
which the people are vitally concerned.
So long as education is for culture, we
let those get it who can afford it; but the
moment we begin to think of education
in terms of what concerns all of us, the
public must take it in hand. At the
same time, the beginnings of public edu-
cation, whether in the elementary grades
or in the college and university grades,
take on a curious resemblance to the tra-
ditional education of the leisure classes.

With further experience and with the
clearing of thought the state and munici-
pal colleges have gradually found them-
selves. We no longer think of these in-
stitutions as offering to all and sundry
the "advantages" of higher education for
the taking. We think of them more and
more as the public agency for training
specialized public servants. The private
institution may continue to point to the
brilliant successes of its graduates; and
it need make no distinction between those
who succeed in exploiting their fellows
and those who succeed in rendering dis-
tinguished service. But the college of
the people does not point with pride as a
means of advertisement; it looks to its
effective alumni as the sole justification
for its existence.

Whatever advantage the graduate of
the city's college may gain from his
higher education, he must not be permit-
ted to carry away the notion that the
"free" college gives him something for
nothing; nor the notion that the institu-
tion exists for his special benefit. These
notions are too much like those of the
confused and uncomfortable "taxpayer."
Whatever the advantages to the indi-
vidual, the function of the college is con-
cerned primarily with better citizens and
better servants. If the training given
is indeed a privilege, it must be accepted
as a preparation for the privilege of
serving.

This does not mean that graduates of
public colleges are to find their occupa-

tions in the immediate service of the city or the state. It means that whatever trades or professions these graduates may follow are to be imbued with the spirit of public service. We prepare better lawyers and better machinists, better teachers and better farmers, better dentists and better clothiers—not that selected girls and boys may be given advantages over their fellow citizens, but that their fellow citizens may be better housed and better clothed, better fed and better cared for in health and in justice. It is very important that this view be made perfectly clear to the taxpayers, to the students, to their parents—and to their instructors.

TEACHERS AND BOSSES

THE MAN or woman working in a shop is responsible to the foreman, and eventually to the employer. Those in immediate authority have the power of discharge, and, however arbitrarily this power may be exercised, the victim has no redress. No redress, that is, unless he happens to be a member of a well organized trade or craft union. Whatever else the unions of workers may or may not have accomplished, they have in many cases established the principle that discharge shall be for cause commonly recognized to be fair.

The man or woman working for the public is responsible to the foreman or supervisor, but eventually to the public. This makes an important difference, since the right of discharge, while vested in officials must ultimately represent the public sentiment on what is fair in such matters, whether the workers are organized or not. As a matter of fact there have grown up many regulations governing the tenure and discharge of public employes, including school teachers, calculated to prevent unfair discrimination or the abuse of power on the part of appointing officials. Yet it is well known that employes are frequently treated with injustice, and that for all practical purposes the machinery for securing justice often fails to perform its functions.

The reason for this failure lies largely

in two circumstances connected with the public service. One is that administration is too largely in the hands of people trained in the commercial school of treating human beings as mere conveniences in the process of extracting profit from industry. The other is that civil employes, including teachers, are conscious of the futility of individual protest, and lacking organization and being inarticulate, permit injustices to become customary.

As part of our function as teachers, we must take up the burden of educating first ourselves and then the rest of the public on these fundamental matters. First, the commissioners and superintendents and principals and supervisors, and so on, are not our employers or bosses. They are, with us, the trustees of the public in carrying forward certain public enterprises. Second, as trustees of the public we ourselves must use every legitimate means to establish conditions favorable to carrying on the work we have undertaken. This includes the formation of organizations designed to maintain and to elevate the *standards* of service. This includes no less the formation of organizations designed to maintain the *freedom* of the service from the debasement and demoralization resulting from the introduction of "politics" and other indirect methods of influencing thought and the expression of thought.

Teachers must be free to do their best work, quite as much for the welfare of the children as for their own comfort. They must be free to devote themselves to their work without need to worry about "prospective legislation" or "changes in administration" or about officious and obstructive supervision. This does not mean that they must be secure in their positions without regard to the efficiency of their service. It means that their tenure and their advancement must be completely detached from all considerations of political or personal preferences—or antagonisms; that their tenure and income shall be completely detached from all considerations of administrative expediency.

This necessary freedom has been in part attained thru the standardization of methods for selecting, appointing and promoting teachers. It cannot be attained in sufficient measure to meet the needs of the public for high and devoted service until the teachers are organized to assert themselves openly and frankly, and to take over their responsibilities in the management of the public schools.

COMPLAINT AND REPLY

- REPETITION COMES perilously near to truth,—for the earnest-minded, especially when they feel aggrieved.
- The charge has been repeated that our Magazine is partial to high school teachers, indifferent to elementary school confreres.
- We shall not flatly deny a *seemingly* true indictment.
- However, in honor of Truth, we must reply that the charge is one-sided, half false.
- That high school teachers are the steadiest supporters of our Journal is of course true.
- That a conspiracy to debar Elementary School Teacher is responsible for the situation is most untrue.
- The simple fact is this: for reasons perfectly well known to all our readers, the elementary schools are less aggressive than the secondary schools. The latter have more courageous, more outspoken teachers.
- What more natural than to find the more outspoken teachers contributing most abundantly to our magazine?
- Our Editorial Staff is a co-operative Board. You may come to any of our meetings. We have enough work to plan and to execute for all interested teachers.
- Nothing would so delight us as a vigorous amalgamation of *all* grades of teachers. Distinctions are not only odious; they are positively dishonest.
- "The American Teacher" renews its loyalty to the hard-pressed teachers.
- We never forget your interests.

WHAT WE NEED

More and more it becomes evident that the great need among teachers is not so much a keen sense of their own wrongs as it is a wider social vision, the discernment of the common cause underlying the antagonisms which characterize the life of today. Is it not time that the teachers got outside of themselves into the common life of humanity? We have opportunities for information and means for clearness of thought far in excess of those of the average citizen. Merely as a profession, ours is more than usually free from the sordid pressure which so sorely besets most others. In a very real sense we are, if we will be, the keepers of the light. The public has a right to look to us for a disinterestedness of action which can hardly be expected of any other occupation. In a democracy government is not a profession, but its executors are drawn from the ranks of the citizens. By virtue of training, education, and leisure the mantle of leadership logically belongs to us. Have we among us enough vision and personality to wear it?

We must have a realization of what kind of leadership is needed. There is a superfluity of leaders who are such because of the force with which they can denounce things as they are, but a dearth of leaders who see, and can make others see, that the underlying evil in present conditions is the fact that one may legally obtain possession of wealth for which he does not produce any equivalent, thereby robbing the man who did produce it. We make a great fuss over the illegal procedures of combinations of capital, but we are robbed a hundredfold more extensively by their perfectly legal procedures. Until our leaders definitely recognize this underlying source of pollution of our economic life their efforts will be at cross purposes. Effects are not isolated events, to be dealt with by repression at each point of

eruption, but by purifying the source of the stream.—*Bulletin of Federation of Men Teachers, Chicago.*

DYNAMIC TRUTH

*"Perhaps the most menacing of all American institutions is the perfected organization which enables the few to live at the expense of the many. In three centuries, the United States, in company with Western civilization, has produced or at least tolerated a system which automatically takes from the values created in the industrial process, a certain proportion, and places it in the hands of any person or any association which at that particular time happens to hold the key which unlocks the Golden Flood—the key of property ownership. This income is not paid as a reward for virtue; people who receive it are vicious. It is not paid in return for meritorious, social service; some of those who receive it are notoriously anti-social in all of their dealings. It is not paid for abstinence; many of the recipients of property income never knew what it was to abstain. It is not paid for saving; there are people with vast incomes, who during their entire lives have never done anything except spend. It is not paid for productive effort; children, disabled persons, idlers and wastrels are among its recipients. There is one thing and one thing only for which property income is paid, and that is the ownership of a piece of property which is so scarce and so desired by another that he is willing to give a return for the privilege of using it. Today the ownership of property gives to the owner a royalty privilege. He may always invest it and receive five per cent on it. It is virtually a power to tax, exercised by an individual owner of property against the productive activities of the community, and exercised because of the title deeds which the property owner holds.—SCOTT NEARING in *Income*.*

Student of the College of the City of New York: Realize that this the "City College Number" lines you up with important constructive forces in society.

THE WORKER'S POINT OF VIEW

AT THE ANNUAL convention of the Illinois Federation of Labor, the Committee on Schools reported, in part, as follows:

The efforts of the great commercial interests to control the educational policy of the country and their vicious attacks upon all who interfere with their plans have become a menace to the public school system.

The welfare of the workers and their children demands that a close watch be kept upon all legislation concerning schools, upon the acts of Boards of Education, and all educational tendencies and policies.

Your committee recommends the appointment of a permanent committee on schools to safeguard the children of the workers, to secure for all students the right to mental freedom in education, and to secure the expression in the educational system of the ideas of organized labor.

Schools are practically useless if the teachers are not at liberty to teach the truth. And just now we have some striking examples of the activities of those powerful privileged classes endeavoring to control the expression of the teachers, to frighten teachers into servile submission to their ideas so that these teachers will teach such ideas and fallacious principles as these privileged classes want taught.

It has taken a tremendous fight by the combined forces of labor and the teachers to prevent these privileged interests from establishing a separate system of schools for the poor man's children. They openly avow that a separate system of schools should be established by the State for the purpose of teaching trades to children of fourteen years of age and over.

This is unfair to children to fix them permanently in some particular trade before they have the development or judgment or taste to decide upon their life work, and we believe that vocational education should develop gradually and naturally in the present school system and that it will do so if given the proper financial encouragement and support.

Therefore, we must prepare to fight for the rights of childhood by opposing this selfish plan of the factory and corporation interests.

The best defense of the schools in a free, courageous, intelligent force of teachers organized and affiliated with the labor movement of the country and coöperating with the workers for the protection of democratic ideals in education.

The committee's report was unanimously adopted by the convention.

These "laborers" seem to think more of the schools and of the rights and responsibilities of teachers, than do many of the teachers themselves.

EFFICIENCY AND DEMOCRACY

There is no city in the United States in which the majority of the citizens do not prefer efficiency to inefficiency in municipal government. In none of these cities does a candidate for municipal office ever fail to promise that in the event of his election he will give—among other things—an EFFICIENT administration. His opponent promises the same thing and yet no matter who is elected, it is a notorious fact that thus far in American cities efficiency has been most frequently conspicuous by its absence. Critics from foreign lands and critics at home have pointed this fact out to us again and again.

In marked contrast to the frequently observed efficiency in most large enterprises and under some of the more autocratic governments, in our cities efficiency has seemed hitherto unattainable. Being so generally regarded as essential, this failure has given some pessimists an excuse for crying that democracy is a failure.

Our problem as a people is to conserve what we have acquired in the way of democracy—and extend it whenever we can—and at the same time develop the technique—the mechanics of government along effective lines—From *Citizen's Business*, Philadelphia Bureau of Municipal Research, 16 December, 1915.

We need your co-operation. Get another subscriber.

WHAT A TEACHERS' UNION IS NOT

FREDERICK MILLER

EVERY MOVEMENT directed towards increasing the wellbeing of an oppressed group thru union, has always been sure to receive the open and covert attacks of the organs of entrenched privilege—the press. The attempt to form a Teachers' Union is no exception to this rule. Playing upon the feeling to which teachers have so long clung, namely, that they are not workers, and therefore can have no interests in common with workers, some of the papers have already begun to hold up the idea of a Teachers' Union first to ridicule and then to scorn. That method they hope will bring the virus of that almost dormant feeling to the surface.

To make assurance doubly sure, they go on to picture the horrors of a teachers' strike. They point out the possibility of the moulders of the rising generations going out on strike in sympathy with the Moulders' Union or the Carpenters Union because of a dispute with their bosses—and thus discredit the plan of affiliating with the American Federation of Labor.

Needless to say there is not the slightest basis for these fears. Organizations affiliating with the American Federation of Labor retain absolute independence in the management of their affairs. *They are not required to join in sympathetic strikes.* The Chicago Teachers' Federation in the fourteen years of its affiliation with the Chicago Federation of Labor has not only never been asked to join in any sympathetic strike, but also never even thought of going out on strike itself. The Chicago teachers achieved their success not by striking—a weapon which only the brutality of employers has forced upon workers—but thru the constructive strength derived from the union of all the members of a group, supported by the union of their fellow workers.

Teachers who hesitate about joining a Teachers' Union for fear of being called out on strike or in sympathetic strikes should dismiss these bogies from their minds. By affiliating with the American

Federation of Labor we enter into no agreement other than to subscribe to a set of principles which were described in the February AMERICAN TEACHER—principles which every rightminded man or woman accepts without reservation. We gain from such affiliation the support and influence of organized labor in America.

Another claim that the papers have set up is that a union would drag the schools into politics; it being understood that politics is sometimes very unclean and that the schools are at present wholly and entirely free from political control. Both the President of the Board of Education and the Mayor no doubt will assure us on this score. One of the great services the Teachers' Union can render the public in the direction of increasing the efficiency of the schools is to change the role the schools are now playing as the football of politics. It can create an intelligent understanding on the part of the public concerning the needs and purposes of the schools and so insure proper support for city's most important duty—the education of the children.

And if in addition the Union should give the teachers a practical insight into political affairs, it will merely train for more intelligent citizenship those who are charged with training the youth for that position.

OBSTACLES TO EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS

In his second monograph on the Individual Child versus the Lockstep system of schooling, Frederic Burk gives the following schedule of the "real difficulties in introducing the individual system." These difficulties would seem to apply to the introduction of every educational advance:

I The inertia of the administrative departments of school systems. We schoolmasters have grown up in our system. We are part and parcel of it, as it is of us. "The virtue in most request," said Emerson, "is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves

not realities and creators, but names and customs."

Our first and most forcible reaction to any proposal for change is defense and argumentative objection to change. We are willing to work our fingers to the bone to make productive the primitive machinery we have, but our natural tendency is to attack any proposal to substitute new machinery. We are not willing to give new proposals a hearing, much less a trial. This is all natural, human, and, in the majority of cases, the safe thing. It is a condition with which all reform must justly wrestle and by which finally be tested.

II The teaching body, with a minority of exceptions, is naturally, and more or less justly, fearful that change will mean personal inconvenience. Teachers have experienced the ravages of many new nostrums, most of which have come to naught. There is usually justice and sanity in their suspicion.

III The public mind is ever ready to condemn an existing system, but is as extremely suspicious of any proposal of remedy. The public mind is enthusiastically destructive, but always pessimistic as to reconstruction.

The above are natural, and more or less legitimate difficulties in the way of school reform. But there are a number of illegitimate impediments. These are vested personal interests—(1) officials who are not interested in schools, except for personal advantage, and it matters nothing to them whether or not schooling is efficient, provided they are not disturbed; (2) incompetents who do not grasp the facts of existing evils, and feel that such agitation "hurts business"; (3) commercial book publishers whose business would require expensive changes, etc.

Every new subscription means added strength to the movement for democracy.

PENNSYLVANIA'S NEW LAW

ON THE FIRST of the year Pennsylvania's new Child Labor and Continuation School law went into effect. This is at present the most advanced law we have on the subject, in that it provides eight hours per week of continuation school attendance for all children under sixteen who have left school to go to work. The special provisions of the law are summarized as follows:

It limits the hours of labor of certain minors so that their physical well-being may be safe-guarded.

It prohibits the working of minors at occupations which would be harmful to their moral or physical being.

It provides an effective system of issuing employment certificates.

It establishes continuation schools for children between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years, so that they may receive a type of instruction that will increase their efficiency as workers and their *intelligence as citizens*.

It prevents the employment of those minors who are not physically fit to work, and of all minors who are under twelve years of age.

This law goes farther than the Wisconsin law in requiring eight hours per week of schooling, as against five; but it permits the same number of work hours in addition to the schooling—forty-three. This makes the Pennsylvania child's week a longer one. The Wisconsin law contemplates the extension of the continuation schooling to minors up to the age of seventeen. The issuing of certificates to employers, and the holding of employers responsible for the enforcement of the law is also a decided gain. Altho by no means perfect, the new law will be welcomed as a distinct contribution to the working out of the present difficulties in the field of adolescent education.

It is not enough to teach the "truth as we understand it." We must teach the love of truth, we must inspire the children to set out upon the magnificent adventure in search of truth.

PERFECT PATRIOTISM

"The American Teacher" IS growing in circulation. But our progress is feeble compared with our Possibilities. A few loyal enthusiasts, no matter how able, cannot perform Miracles.

We must invoke the untiring aid of a whole host of Friends.

If one alert teacher in each of our Elementary, High, and Training Schools volunteered to act as our Agent, we could conjointly accomplish Great Things.

A little courage, a little enthusiasm, a little good fellowship—these three guarantee achievement.

We are on the eve of stirring doings. Every Agent enlisted in our behalf is rendering a service to Public Welfare.

Every Agent who sells "The American Teacher" to his more isolated fellows is promoting Socialization in Education.

If you feel the call to Social Service, kindly indicate your willingness to help us by sending your name to the Circulation Manager.

All sexes welcome.

FOR PARASITES ONLY

We beg to assure the misguided Elite of our Profession that they are violently mistaken if they believe THE AMERICAN TEACHER to be an appendage of Organized Charity.

To be kind is human.

To be generous is divine.

To be too kind or too generous is neither human nor divine: it is only silly. Silliness is the void in the heart of life created by irresponsibility.

To those numerous persons who read our Journal without paying for the privilege, we would say:

Cease to exploit our humaneness.

Cease to deride our magnanimity.

Cease to outrage our generosity.

Oh beloved Parasites,

Art is Long

and

Life is Short

and

Cash is Scarce.

Be decent. Pay as you enter. The Joy Ride is worth the price.

Have you renewed your subscription? If not, DO IT NOW!

INSPIRATION

Inspiration is the ecstasy of sheer Sincerity.

Sheer sincerity is the cumulative intensity of a Passionate Purpose.

A passionate purpose is a faith chastened by Wisdom.

Wisdom is deep experience dignified by human Service.

Human service is the yearning for earthly Joy.

All great inspiration is the confluence of

Sincerity, Purpose, Wisdom, Service, and Joy.

* * * * *

And we teachers? What do we know of life's inspirations?

Routineers we, imitators and emulators, drudges all.

No brilliant vision illuminates our low horizons.

No world-shaking dream haunts our songless minds.

The revelations of philosophy, the clean ecstasy of poetry,

The unattainable grandeur of sheer aspiring,

The challenging beauty of thought,

All the singing godliness of our common humanity,

—What magic quickenings do they bring to us?

* * * * *

Depressed by the weight of routine, we sink to the level of machines.

Sapped and strained by friction's discontent, we frivol away life's sacred hours.

We are dead; Call us dead wood, call us deadheads; it matters not.

We vegetate and slowly decay and know it not!

We are the dead that never awaken, for we lack INSPIRATION.

GOD! And Europe is bleeding to death!